

*The Law not destroyed but estab-
lished by the Gospel.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACH'D

At the Cathedral Church of St. PAUL,
April the 7th. 1701.

BEING

The FOURTH for the Year 1701. of the LECTURE
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle Esq;*

By *GEORGE STANHOPE, D. D.*
Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.

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Printed for RICHARD SARE at *Grays-Inn-Gate* in
Holborn, MDCCI.

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Rom. III. 31.

Do We then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid. Yea, We establish the Law.

HAVING already asserted the Evidence for the Christian to be in all points equal at least to that for the Jewish Faith; I now proceed to consider what the Jews have found to object from the pretended Inconsistence between them. And the Substance of what I have to say upon this Argument was * formerly laid down in the following Proposition. *That, There is no such Disagreement between the Old and New Testament, as can in reason prejudice Any who embrace the Old, against receiving the New also in the quality of a Divine Revelation. Quite otherwise, that These do so mutually confirm and illustrate each other, that either Both must be, or it seems very hard to conceive, how Either of them can be true and divinely inspired.* ¹⁹ * Sermon 1. Page.

Now, taking the Jewish Scriptures, as they are commonly distinguished into the Law and the Prophets, We Christians are accused of perverting both. The One, by assuming to our selves an undue exemption from the Law of Moses: The Other, by misinterpreting and misapplying the Predictions of future Events, contained in those Holy Books. And this is a Charge, which not only our Adversaries lay great weight upon, but our Blessed Lord himself seems to allow, that it would, if true, be a just prejudice against Him and his Doctrine; when he forbids any of his Hearers to suspect him guilty of derogating from the Jewish

Scriptures in either of these respects. For to this purpose is that memorable Text: * *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

As to what concerns the Prophetick part, that will come under examination hereafter. At present I shall apply my self to the other Article of this Indictment, which you find St. Paul with some degree of warmth pleading *Not Guilty* to, in the words of my Text, *Do we then make void the Law through Faith? God forbid. Yea we establish the Law.*

In order to a right understanding of which Plea, it will be convenient to take a short view of the Apostle's Argument; and observe from thence, how this Objection might be supposed to lye against him, and upon what ground his Vindication stands.

The main Design of this Epistle is to let men see, upon what Terms they are warranted to expect Pardon of their Sins and Eternal Life. Which the Author affirms to be ordinarily attainable no other way, than by the Belief and Obedience of the Gospel of Christ. To that Purpose he represents the deplorable condition of all mankind, without the Remedy thus provided for them. Of the *Heathen* world, by that sad and universal degeneracy of manners, of which the

(a) V. 20. &c. *First* (a) Chapter gives so black a description. Of the Jewish Nation, by proving out of their own Scriptures, (b) that, notwithstanding the peculiar advantages of a Divine and Written Law, They too had fallen into many and grievous Enormities, and were by no means qualified, by any assistances which that Law did or could afford them, to stand the Test of a just and rigorous Judgment. Since then, whatever there might be in other respects, yet in regard of Guilt and

and the Insufficiency of their own Works to justify them, there was no difference (c) between these two (c) V. 22, 23. sorts of Men: It remains, that All stood in need of a Dispensation of Free Grace, and a Ransom (d) for (d) V. 24, 25. those Souls, which were forfeited by Transgression. Now this Provision God, he says, has made, by the Death of his Son, and by determining to forgive and accept all that believe in Him, not for their Own, but for His sake and sufferings: Many intimations whereof had been long ago given to the Jews by their (e) Law and Prophets. And thus, as the Sins (e) V. 21. 22. of all Mankind had rendered such a Method necessary, so God had approved himself the common affectionate (f) Father of all mankind, by diffusing the Benefits of it; (f) V. 29. 30. and putting All upon the same foot for Pardon and Salvation, who had already put themselves upon the same, in their Sins and their Wants. For that thus the Case stood is the plain Consequence of the Apostle's reasoning about this matter. But then he foresaw another Consequence withal, which Some might be apt to draw, though in truth it did not follow from this Discourse. And that was, that the *Christian* Dispensation, meant by *Faith* in my Text, seem'd to bear hard upon the *Jewish*, and argue it a frivolous and fruitless Institution; which is the importance of making void the Law here. To this St. Paul replies, that he had no such thought. So far from it, that the true End and Purpose of the Law is secured by the Gospel; and the *Christian* Scheme of Religion, instead of evacuating or disparaging the *Jewish*, is the Glory, the proper Perfection and Accomplishment of it. Thus I understand those last words, *God Forbid. Yea we establish the Law.*

But, this so solemn Allegation notwithstanding,

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it is undeniable matter of Fact, that many Ordinances of that Law are now disused and set aside by Christians, as not only unnecessary, but even unlawful to be observed. St. Peter (g) calls them a *Yoke not to be born*; St. Paul, (h) a *Bondage from which Christ hath set us free*; and testifies, that Every man, who by the federal Rite of Circumcision had made himself a Debtor to the Law, was *fallen from Grace*, and that *Christ was to such become of none effect*. Are not these Terms of great indignity, or can they ever stand with this Declaration in my Text? Do the Men that teach such things *establish*? Do they not indeed perfectly *make void the Law*? Nay, do they not minister very just occasion for that Inference, which the *Jews* so vehemently urge, and can by no means away with, that God, at this rate, hath retracted his former Revelations, overthrown his own beloved Constitutions, and proceeded with such Levity in the *New*, or else such Weakness in the *Old* Establishment, as cannot, without the last degree of Ignorance or Impiety, be imputed to an Allwise, and consequently an Unchangeable Being?

No; say the Christians, We absolutely disclaim, We utterly abhor the Consequence; We constantly maintain, that by *Our* Principles neither is Your Law, nor the Author of it dishonoured. For whereas That is partly *Moral*, partly *Ceremonial*, and partly *Judicial*; The Last Branch, being not properly of Religious but merely of Civil Importance, can have little or no place in the present Question. The *Moral* Precepts are not only retained, but even enforced and exalted in the Christian Rule of Manners: And the *Ceremonial*, Partly, as Distinctions peculiar to that People, Partly, as Figures of things then to come, but now already

come

come; But upon both accounts neither of Universal nor Perpetual Obligation, are not so properly cast off, as worn out: They cease of course, because the Grounds, and Uses to which they were appointed, have long since ceased. So that here is no Fickleness, no hard Reflection in all this: Because what was of Intrinsick Goodness in the *Jewish* Economy is preserved entire in the *Christian*; What was Typical with Them is accomplished with Us; What was defective there is supplied here: And all this in such manner, as, we make no doubt, was intended from the beginning; and ordained by God to be, when the proper season should come for that Institution (wise and good for the Time, and Persons, and Purposes it was suited to) to be succeeded by another, of greater excellence, and of more general extent and benefit; One which That all along look'd forward at, and was intended to prepare men for. If then the *Law* be *made void* by such a *Faith*, it is only so, as Promises are voided by being fulfilled; Or as Images become useless, when their Originals are present; Or as Rules for educating Children are laid aside, when the Heir is of Age, and their Aim is answered. In a word, The Scope of the Old Testament, We say, is attained by the New; and could never have been attained without it. And, since every Law is then most truly *established*, when the purpose of enacting it is fully served; this mistaken imputation of destroying the *Jewish* Law was thought worthy to be disowned with some vehemence; and it was matter of just indignation to *St. Paul*, that He and his Doctrine should be thought wanting in respect to *Moses* and his Institution, which paid them all due honour, and by the very preaching of the Gospel, did thus *establish the Law*.

But

- (i) Jud. ad Limb. Ser. iii. Qu. ii. n. 2. Qu. iii. n. 10. 14. But all these Arguments the Jews cry out against, as contrived to serve a Cause, and built upon no solid foundation of Reason or Scripture. : They fiercely contend, " that the *Messias* should (i) not, could not, and that our *Jes* did not, raise the Moral Law to any higher Perfection, than *Moses* left it in. They urge, that (k) Their Ritual and Outward is, in that very respect, more perfect and acceptable to God, than the *Christian* Spiritual and Inward Worship. They *peremptorily* deny, that their Ceremonial Law (l) was Given as a mark of distinction for that people, so as to be Typical, or Temporary, or insufficient for the Salvation of Sinners, and upon these or any other accounts so much as capable of a Repeal. They insist, that " God, had he intended to supersede it, would and (m) ought to have signified it by some plain Text of Scripture, which he hath never done, but frequently the contrary. They turn upon us the Examples of *Jes* and (n) his Apostles, observing him in their own persons, and whome declaring against it in the four Gospels, allowing the newly converted Jews in the use of it, may enjoy some parts of it to the Gentile Brethren as Committed, which they think can never be reconciled with the Opinion of it's being abrogated, and even unlawful to be observed. And lastly, They produce some Prophecies of Others, say of *Moses* (who sure could not but understand the temporary obligation of a Law, which himself received from God, and delivered to his people) signifying, that they shall not only be gathered again from their present Dispersion, and shall then keep his Law in their midst, but that from whence they suppose it is now said to follow, that this Law is every where abrogated, is

(i) Jud. ad
Limb. Ser. iii.
Qu. ii. n. 2. Qu.
iii. n. 10. 14.

(k) Jud. ad.
Limb. Ser. iii.
Qu. iii. n. 5.
10, 11, 12.

(l) Ibid. Qu.
ii. n. 5. Qu. iii.
n. 13.

(m) Ibid. Qu.
i. n. 7. 8. 9. 11.
13.

(n) Ibid. Qu.
i. n. 7. 9. 10.

(o) Ibid. Qu. ii.
n. 3.

“ still in full force, and shall continue so to the End of
“ the World.

My endeavour now must be, in answer to these Objections, to make good the following Particulars,

1. *First*, That the Messiah should, and that our *Jesus* did exalt the Moral Law, by leaving us a more perfect Rule of Virtue, than he found the *Jews* possess'd of at his Coming.

2. *Secondly*, That a Spiritual and Inward Worship, (such as the Christian) is better in it self, and more acceptable to God, than an Outward and Ceremonial, such as the *Jews* contend for.

3. *Thirdly*, That the Ceremonial parts of the *Mosaic* Institution were designed to be peculiar distinctions to the people of the *Jews*, Types of the Messiah and the Gospel State, and of themselves incapable to put away Sin.

4. *Fourthly*. That God did not only intend that Institution should cease, but had sufficiently intimated his pleasure in this particular.

5. *Fifthly*. That the Examples of *Jesus*, of the *Apostles*, and first Converts to the Faith, are no way inconsistent with the Christian Doctrine, concerning the Expiration of the Levitical Law. No, Nor,

6. *Lastly*. Are those Predictions of *Moses* and the other Prophets any proof of it's Perpetual, or even Present Obligation; not even when interpreted of the *Jews* return from their present Dispersion.

Of These in their Order, and as briefly as the Subject will well bear. This One thing only let me premise concerning the manner of proceeding in these Proofs, (*viz*) That, after what hath been formerly delivered upon the Evidence for the *Christian*, as compared with that we have for the *Jewish* Faith, I look upon my

self priviledged not to forego the advantage of Arguments and Authorities drawn out of the New Testament. Which (besides that they ought to be admitted for good proof by the *Jews* themselves, till the Testimonies already produced for setting them at least upon the same level with any taken from *Moses* and the Prophets, can be overthrown) are proper in this place at least, to confirm and illustrate some Truths, which need not, I hope, upon the account of any that hear me, professedly be proved.

(p) Clarius in
Efeb. De-
monst. Evang.
L. 1. b. 7.
Deut xviii.

(q) Acs. iii. 22.

* Efeb. Dem.
Evang. L. 1. b.

* Ch. iv. 2.

1. *First* then, I am to shew, that the *Messiah* was to exalt, and that accordingly *Jesus* did exalt the Moral Law, and leave it a more perfect Rule of Virtue, than he found the *Jews* possess'd of at his Coming. That this was part of the *Messiah's* business, some (p) have inferr'd from that Text of *Deuteronomy*, applyed by St. *Peter* (q) to *Christ*, *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me, him shall ye hear*. Now the Character of a Law-giver is a resemblance to *Moses*, which no other Prophet under that dispensation could lay claim to; Their Office extending no farther than to explain and enforce the Law already delivered, and still remaining in full power and virtue. But He, who came to propose a New Covenant, and conditions of Obedience distinct from the Levitical Ordinances, acted by an Authority equal to that of *Moses* in his Legislative Capacity; and so as renders that Threatning very proper, of the People being bound to hear him upon penalty of utter destruction. * The same is yet more clearly foretold elsewhere, particularly by *Micah*,* in those words, confessed I think on all hands to respect the coming of the *Messiah*, that then *the law should go forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem*.

That this was likewise the general expectation of them

them that look'd for a *Messiah*, may be very probably inferred from the discourse which passed between our Lord and the Woman of *Samarita*. Who, upon being told, that the dispute concerning the place of divine Worship exclusive of all others, should shortly have an end: and that God, who *is a spirit Seeks such to worship him*, as do it *in spirit and Truth*; answers, *We know (r) that Messias cometh, which is called Christ, when he is come, he will tell us all things*: that is, as the Context and Occasion of those words determine the expression, He will inform us so fully in our duty, which as yet we understand but imperfectly, that we shall then need no further instruction. To these I only add at present the *Jews* own Testimony, who gloss (s) upon those first words of *Ecclesiastes* after this manner, *All is Vanity*, that is, say They, *All that Law, which we have been taught in the present state of things, is vanity in comparison of the Law of the Messias*. It concerns the Modern *Jews* to see, how this Exposition can be reconciled with that Assertion, which Some now (t) advance, "that the "Giving new Revelations, or perfecting of old Laws, "neither is any part of the *Messias's* business, nor was "ever expected from him, nor is so much as possible to "be done by him. In the mean while neither do We affirm, that Christ should either reveal or ordain any thing contrary to the Revelations or Laws received before; but only that he should improve and perfect them, in instances to which men did not apprehend themselves to be obliged before; reduce things to their proper use, and make all so complete, as in this respect to deserve the Title of the Christian Law-giver. And how our *Jesus* did this, a very few words will suffice to shew: The fewer, because this Point hath had great right done it already, by a * Learned Person who stood here before me.

(r) Joh. iv 23.
24, 25.

(s) See This and more to the same effect in Raym Mart. Pug. Fid. P. 3. Dist. 3. C. 20. n. 13.

(t) Jud ad Limb. Ser. iii. Qu. 2. n. 1. Qu. 3. n. 10.

* Mr. Bradford Boyle Lect. 1699. Serm. 5.

I think it needless upon this occasion to engage in a dispute, whether our Blessed Lord made any material addition to the *Moral Law*, as delivered by *Moses*.
 (u) Matt. v. 22. The Rules he left us for governing (u) our Passions,
 (w) 28, 29, 30. for Suppressing the first (w) motions of Unclean Desires, for putting (x) up Injuries, for enlarging the
 (x) 39, 42. object (y) of our Charity, by loving even strangers,
 (y) 44. & c. Luk. even enemies, and doing good to all Mankind. The
 x. 29, 37. commands so often repeated of forsaking all and laying down our very lives for the sake of Truth and our
 (z) Matt. v. 31. Duty; The restraining (z) his followers from some
 32. xix. 3. 10. Liberties allowed the *Jews* in regard to Polygamy and Divorce; These and some other Instances have led Many to maintain, that the Gospel hath some commands perfectly New and peculiar to it self. The *Jews* on the other hand contend, that these are all contained and implied in those general Precepts of *Not coveting, Loving God with all the heart, and our Neighbour as our selves*. Admit for the present that it be so; and, that the Sermon on the Mount does not intend to refine upon *Moses*, but only to correct the false and corrupt Glosses upon him; yet even thus I still insist upon it, that the Moral Law, as delivered by our Saviour, hath received great and manifest improvements.

To this purpose I desire it may be observed, that the Excellence of any Law, considered as a Law, does not consist entirely and only in the Intrinsic Goodness or subject Matter of the Duties enjoined by it, but proportionably in all those other necessary Qualifications, which contribute to the effectual attainment of it's proper End. Now the End of every Law is the Regulation of Manners, by promoting the practice of those things it enjoins, and suppressing the contrary Vices it prohibits. Since therefore

fore the constituent parts of a Law are the Precept and the Sanction; it follows that One Law may excel another in Either, or Both of these respects. In respect of the *Former*, A Law that is full, and clear, and express, is confessedly more perfect, than One dark, and involved in general Terms, which leaves men (who are not apt to be over-sagacious in discoveries and interpretations that tend to their own Confinement) to find the True measure of their duty by remote Consequences, and a long deduction of Particulars. It follows again, that a Law is more or Less perfect in respect of the *Latter*, According to the encouragement it propounds, or the penalty it binds by; the quality and value of the Rewards promised to the diligent observers of it, and the terrour and weight of the Punishments threatned to the disobedient and refractory. Since then the Moral Law hath under the Gospel State explained mens duty more fully, and, if not extended it farther, yet express'd it in it's just and utmost extent: Since it hath cut off all evasions from pretended ignorance, in many degrees of Goodness, and cases of great importance, which neither the common People, nor even the Teachers of the *Jews* held themselves obliged to before; Since, Again, the Gospel does not only direct men in their Obedience, but assist them in the performance, by supplies of Grace, which the Law of *Moses* could not confer: Since This engages our utmost diligence by express Promises of Eternal Life, which that Law did no where positively covenant for, but only for Prosperity and Health, and the Promised Land; Since this restrains the Sinner by threatnings of certain and eternal Vengeance, whereas that Law denounced only temporal Sufferings, Affliction and Captivity, Diseases and Bodily Death: Since the

the Gospel-Compensation is an Over-balance for all we can do, or endure, to attain it; and the Gospel Penalty such as no Pleasure or present Profit can make us amends for incurring: But the Law, supposing it to require all that the Gospel requires, (as dying for Religion in particular) does not propose a valuable Consideration for the duties it enjoins; It cannot, I think, be refused me, that the Moral Law is exalted by *Jesus* and his Doctrine; And that, either by adding to the Matter of it, or at least by adding to the Clearness and Strength, the Efficacy and Obligation of it, he hath left it a more perfect Rule and Motive of Obedience, than he found it at his Coming.

I am well aware what may be objected to some part of this Argument, by urging, that the Holy men under the Law were likewise assisted by divine Grace, and that the *Jews* in general have all along believed, and acted in expectation of Rewards in a Future State. I readily grant all this; but I deny withal, that either that Grace, or those Expectations, had the Law of *Moses* for their Foundation, or were ever attained by virtue of it. How the persons who lived under that Dispensation came by them, the Course of my Argument will lead me to enquire hereafter. In the mean while I pass to my

2. *Second Particular*, which undertakes to Prove, that *An Inward and Spiritual Worship* (such as the Christian) is better and more acceptable to Almighty God, than *an Outward and Ceremonial*; (such as *Moses* imposed, and the *Jews* now contend for.) By the *Former* I understand such Acts of Piety and Purity, of Justice and Charity, as flow from a Principle of Religion, and testify those Habits and Dispositions of the Mind, which are congruous to, and naturally productive of them.

them. By the *Latter*, such Religious Performances, as are therefore called Outward and Ceremonial, because expressed by some determinate Rites, as sacrifices, distinction of days, and meats, and such other visible actions, wherein the Body or Outward Man is principally concerned. And here I will take it for granted, that both Parties are thus far of a mind, as to hold, that the *Latter*, when destitute of the *Former*, is by no means sufficient to recommend us to God's acceptance. This is so manifest from the *Fiftieth Psalm*, the *First*, the *Fifty eighth*, the *Sixty Sixth* of *Isaiab*, the *Seventh* of *Jeremiah*; from sundry other Passages in the Prophetic Scriptures, and from the sharp rebukes in which our Lord exposes the Hypocrisy of the *Pharisees* in his time, that the Matter will admit of no dispute. The Question then properly depending I take to be This; When both are done upon a Principle of Conscience, and from a sincere desire to Please God, Whether of the Two is more agreeable to him, and if the Spiritual be of it self defective, and stand in need of the Ceremonial Service to render it acceptable.

Now in this State of the Question the *Jew* Asserts to his Ritual Services not only an equal but even a greater Perfection, upon several (a) Accounts. "As Acts of pure Obedience, the grounds whereof the less we are able to account for, the more honour we do to God, by resigning our own Reason, and submitting to his Appointment, upon this general Perswasion, that his infinite Wisdom no doubt hath weighty and excellent Ends in view, though We cannot enter into them. "That This External and Ritual Worship includes the Inward and Spiritual, and is it's proper Perfection; Consequently then, more acceptable than the Other can possibly be without it. "That God hath shewed

(a) Jud. ad
Limb. Ser. iiii.
Qu. iii. n. 10.
11. 12. 13.

a special regard to This; by requiring some parts of it, (as Sacrifices in particular) not under the Law only, but ever since the beginning of the World, which proves that he never thought himself well served without it. "Nay that he hath plainly given this the Preference, by punishing the neglect or violation of the Ordinances concerning it, with a more severe and exemplary Justice, than some actions of the greatest Moral Turpitude; And may we not fairly conclude, that those Laws, which when transgressed provoke God most, do certainly when observed please him best? "That the *Israelites* are said by these very Observances to be sanctified; And "that this is very consonant to the *Christians* Principles; Who, retaining but Two things of this Nature, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: hold these to be the most exalted acts of their Religion. These are Objections, that deserve to be considered, and I therefore reply to each of them distinctly.

1. And *First*, We readily accept our Adversary's Concession, that the Ceremonial part of the Law hath no consideration to recommend it to us, but pure Obedience to the will of God. But sure this makes a manifest difference, and greatly to the advantage of Moral Duties, that They are founded upon plain Reason, and the Nature of things. From hence it follows, that any other Rites, as well as those under the Law, would have had the same pretended Perfection, and might, had God seen fit, have been ordained in their Stead. But then it follows too, that, without all Nature were revers'd, God could not have prohibited the Moral Virtues, and enjoyned the Contrary: Because these would have introduced universal Confusion, and lain quite cross to all our Original Notices of Good and Evil

Evil. For this very reason, says the Jew, are such Moral Duties of less value, because we pay God greater deference, when we follow his Commands implicitly, than when we make our own Reason the Measure of our Obedience. True: when our own Reason presumes to dictate one thing, and the Law of God directs Another; then God, and not our own Reasonings are to be follow'd. And yet even then too (strictly speaking) we follow Reason; the Last result of which in such cases centers in this, that God knows best what is fit for us to do, and hath a right of making his own Terms; And therefore we conclude, his positive Command ought to over-rule us in despite of any doubts or opinions of our own, which, if we were at liberty, would dispose us to different Measures. But after all, This is not the present Case. The Moral Duties written in men's hearts are no less God's Law, than the Ceremonial; or than the same Moral Duties when written in Tables of Stone. The difference lyes only in the manner of notifying them to us; which in the One case was done by natural Reason, in the Other by Positive Institution. The Doubt then is not, whether God shall be obeyed, but how he is best obeyed; Whether in such a way as I have his Command back'd with the Evidence of my own Reason for; Or whether by Ordinances purely arbitrary, without any Inward Conviction of the Congruity and Excellence of the thing. In short, the whole Design of Religion is to plant and cultivate in our minds such Dispositions, as copy after the Perfections of the Divine Mind, and render us *Holy, as He is Holy*; and a Man must argue very strangely, who maintains, that these Dispositions are not better exerted, in acts which are essentially good, and resemble *God's* beneficent dealings with his Creatures;

than by Sacrifices, or Feasts, or Distinction of Meats, or the like; in which Intrinsick Value, and a Resemblance to our Great Pattern above, are so far from being found, as not to be so much as pretended by their most zealous Advocates. I own indeed, with the Objectors, We ought to rest satisfied, that God had wise and weighty reasons for appointing these heretofore. Doubtless he had; and what some of these probably were, will fall under consideration hereafter. In the mean while I cannot but observe, that this is very improperly urged as an Argument of their Excellence, by Adversaries, who sink the value of our Obedience, in proportion as our knowledge for the Reasonableness of our duty rises. For, upon these Terms, could we imagine God to have no end at all in them, the Ordinances would be still more arbitrary, and by the same Rule our Deference still more respectful and absolute in regard to them.

2. As far from Truth are They, who argue, *Secondly*, that the Ritual includes the Spiritual Worship, and therefore must needs be more perfect than it is possible for the Other to be without it. That the External ought always to express and include the Internal is very certain; but no less so, that in fact it does not do thus; For which, were any proof besides our own experience necessary, the Reproofs and Complaints of the Prophets even now referred to are a plain demonstration. 'Tis said indeed, that Acts materially good may in like manner be done, without those Dispositions, which must render them truly Virtuous; Our Justice may proceed from Interest, our Alms from Vain-glory, and St. Paul supposes it a (b) possible case for a man even to give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, and yet not to have Charity: which alone can

(b) 1 Cor. xiii.
3.

can make them good actions: So that the most exalted Instances of Moral Virtue may be but dead Carcasses, and empty Signs, as well as the Ritual Services of the *Jewish Law*. Agreed; provided we observe this difference; That those Actions are Ordinarily and Naturally the effects and tokens of their respective good Dispositions; and where, like the *barren Fig-tree*, they show fair, and promise fruit, but upon closer examination are found to have nothing but *leaves*; This is a defect foreign and accidental, owing purely to the particular Corruption of the Person then concerned. But between the *Jews* Ceremonial and Moral Services there is no such Affinity or Natural Connexion. They have not in themselves any tendency to purify or improve the mind, as Moral actions are allowed to have. And therefore God, who rejects them, notwithstanding their most solemn Feasts and Oblations, calls upon them (c) to seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, defend (c) Isa. i. 17, the Fatherless, plead for the Widow; and then it follows 18. immediately, Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your Sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as Snow. These Actions are declared to procure their Sacrifices a favourable acceptance, because, generally speaking, they are signs of a mind rightly disposed; but Sacrifices are so far from recommending those who do the contrary, that they are no where declared sufficient to recommend themselves, when destitute of such actions. They are indeed only particular Modes of expressing men's Reverence and Love of God; but this does not infer, that such Reverence and Love cannot be express'd to the full as well without them. They bound that people, on whom they were imposed, to use these expressions at that time; but could not Others therefore, on whom they are not Imposed, please

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God

God without them? Or may not that very People be accepted, when ceasing to observe them; supposing it to be, (as I shall shew it is) the will of God that they should cease to be observed? This is the case of Ritual Services, but of Moral and Spiritual it is manifest there is but One way of performing these. For no Man can approve himself Devout, or Just, or Charitable, but by the Acts and constant exercise of Prayers and Praises, of Justice and Charity.

Nay farther yet: These Acts by custom do naturally improve the mind, bring it to, and fix it in such virtuous dispositions; but the Ceremonial are so far from advancing men in Moral Goodness by any power inherent in themselves, as frequently to fall in with the corruption of Humane nature, and greatly to obstruct substantial Holiness. They devour much of men's time, draw off their thoughts from attending to inward purity, are extremely apt to degenerate into Hypocrisy and Formality, and blow them up with false Confidences and Spiritual Pride. 'Twas thus that in our Saviour's time *the Mint (d) and Anise, and Cummin* justled aside *the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, and Mercy, and Faith*; Thus, that the pretence of *Corban* (e) sanctified unnatural Cruelty to indigent Parents; Thus that *long prayers* kept in countenance them that (f) *devoured widows houses*; Thus, that the Pharisee, (g) *for fasting twice in the week, and paying tithes of all he possess'd*, thank'd God, that he was not as other men are, or even as that *Publican, who went out from the Temple justified rather than himself*. Thus, Lastly, that *Isaiah* long before upbraided (h) those of his days, with *fasting for strife and debate while they bowed down their heads like a bulrush*; and turning the worship of God into an empty show, by *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*.

In

In the mean while, though God prescribed both a Moral and Ritual Service, yet what he preferr'd and chiefly aimed at, is sufficiently explained to the Jews in their own Scriptures. Thus David (i) declares, that God desired no Sacrifice, else he would give it him, but that he delights not in burnt offerings: and then informs us what he did delight in, The Sacrifices of God are a troubled Spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Thus God himself by Hosea, (k) I desired Mercy and not Sacrifice, Thus the Prophet Micah, Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, and ten thousands of rivers of Oyl? He hath shewed thee O man what is good, and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (l) All which are Forms of Speech, that, according to the Hebrew Idiom, do by a Negative not absolutely exclude the thing denied, but only imply a preference of somewhat set in opposition to it. And so 'tis evident they must be understood. For God did desire Sacrifice at the Time when these Prophets wrote, but he desired a penitent and humble frame of mind, a just and holy Conversation, so much more, that in comparison of these, he is said not to desire the most costly Oblations at all. The passage of Hosea is therefore a key for interpreting all the rest, where the whole Verse runs thus, I desired Mercy and not Sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt Offerings. I mention One Text more of the same Importance, the rather, because (give me leave to observe that by the way) it seems to have been very improperly urged by some Learned men, in favour of an Opinion, that Sacrifices were originally of humane Invention, and not Divine Institution. 'Tis that memorable one of Jeremiab, Ch. vii. 22, 23. I spake not to your Fathers, nor commanded them.

(i) Psal. li. 16.

17.

(k) Hof. vi.

6.

(l) See also
Psal. lxxx. 31,
32. Ezek. xx.
25. Psal. l. 23.

them in the day that I brought them out of Egypt, concerning Burnt-offerings or Sacrifices; But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my People. Were not Sacrifices a part of that Worship then required? Did not God in the very
 (m) Exod xii (m) day of their coming out of Egypt institute the Paschal Sacrifice? Did not Moses ask leave of Pharaoh
 (n) Exod. v to go into the wilderness, (n) that they might propitiate God by Sacrifices, lest he should fall upon them with pestilence or with the sword? this cannot be denied.
 3. And therefore (a) the Prophet's design, I take it, is to shew, that though Sacrifices were a part of that Institution, yet Moral Virtue and Obedience were what God principally esteem'd and had in view. So that all these passages are the same in sense and effect with that of Samuel, Hath (p) the Lord as great delight in Sacrifices and Burnt-offerings, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of Rams. Since then the judgment of God is, cannot but be, according to truth; Since the Ritual and Spiritual Worship are only parts of the same Piety, That part which he so frequently, so expressly declares the principal, the ultimate, the most agreeable to Him, we ought to make no difficulty in pronouncing the best and most perfect in it self.

Nor need it give us any Scruple in this matter, that Almighty God hath required such an External Worship ever since the Beginning of the World. For, since a Creature consisting of Body as well as Soul cannot signify the Inward dispositions of his mind, otherwise than by outward and Visible Acts: the very Condition of Humane Nature rendred such Testimonies of Obedience unavoidably necessary. But it is One thing to assert the necessity of Outward Worship in general, and
 Another

Another to infer the Necessity and Merit of that Ceremonial one, enjoined by the Levitical dispensation in particular. And, as to what concerns their Sacrifices, many just and weighty Causes may be assigned, why Some of these should have been required and practised from the beginning of the World; which do not infer any thing at all for the pretended Perfection or intrinsick Goodness of such Rites. But for this my *Third* Particular will oblige me to account hereafter.

As little will the severity of those Punishments, which we read to have been inflicted for the breach of Ritual Laws among the *Jews*, oblige us to conclude the subject matter of those Laws to be of greater weight or perfection than the Moral. For, while such Ordinances continued in force, the Legislatour might appoint his Penalties at pleasure. And, the less there was to enforce men's Obedience from the Reason of the thing, the more needful was a rigorous punishment to secure it. But especially, Those Ordinances being signs of a special Covenant between God and that People, every presumptuous violation of them was a Crime of the highest nature; no less than a constructive Renouncing their relation to Him as his Peculiar; and thus, in an *Israelite*, a more direct Affront and Rebellion against his Authority, than the transgression of any other Laws, (though more important in themselves) which were given to that Nation in common with the rest of Mankind.

And This leads us very naturally to the meaning of *Israel's* being so often said to be *sanctified* by such Observances. The true purport whereof is, not that they conveyed to them any real Holiness or inward Grace, which no Rites, though never so punctually observed, are in
their

their own Nature capable of conferring: But, that these were marks, by which the chosen people of God were known to be His; and thus distinguished from Idolaters, who did not in the same manner belong to him. The setting any thing apart to his service and holy uses, is frequently styled a *sanctifying* even of things not capable of Holiness strictly so called. And how we are to interpret it concerning that people under the Law, is easy to be learnt from those Words of God himself, (*Levit. xx. 24, 25, 26.*) *I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people, ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; And ye shall not make your Souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth upon the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy, for I the Lord am holy; and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.* (q)

(q) See also *Levit. xi. 44 &c. xix. 2.*

(r) *Joh. iii. 5; Mir. xvi. 16. 1 Cor. x. 16. xii. 13.*

Once more. The high opinion *Christians* entertain of their Two Sacraments does in no degree contribute to support the *Jewish* notion of a Ritual and External Worship being more perfect and acceptable than an Inward and Spiritual. In these we do not only commemorate the Redemption purchased by Christ for us, but are taught to believe and expect (r) an inward and Spiritual Grace accompanying the Outward and visible Signs. But all this, not in virtue of the Elements or Acts themselves, but of His promise, who instituted these, as means of conveying to us the Merits and Benefits of his Death, of which the assisting Graces of God's Spirit are a very valuable part. Which effects likewise we confine to such as partake of those Sacraments worthily, and hold, that it is in the power of men to defeat the Intent of these Ordinances as to their own particular,

particular, by coming such, as those promises were never designed to extend, and cannot be effectual to. If any Community of Christians affirm an inherent Efficacy in the Act of participation, not to be evacuated by any Incapacity in the Receiver, we disclaim (s) this as an Errour, of dangerous consequence, and just Matter of Scandal. Let Such answer for themselves, and evade the Jew's objection as they can; but it brings Us under do difficulty, who constantly profess the Christian Sacraments, to persons not duly qualified, to be as mere, as empty Rates, as far from engaging Gods favour and acceptance, as any of the Levitical Ceremonies. In the mean while our honour for these Sacraments is deservedly very great, because they have a natural tendency to awaken and excite in men all manner of good dispositions, by the lively representation of God's hatred to Sin, and love to mankind expressed in the sufferings of his Son; because they put men into a fit condition for receiving divine Grace, by the preparations previous to them: and because when men are in this Condition, they do hereby ensure to themselves such Benefits, as the Mosaick Institution could not confer. For the Grace of God is a Restorative to Humane Nature corrupted and disabled by Sin; but This could only be obtained by His merits, who was himself uncorrupt, and suffered on purpose to repair that lapse. If therefore the Legal performances entitled Men to Grace, it could not be by any inherent Virtue of their own, but only so far forth as they had respect to Him, whose Obedience and Sufferings merited it for fallen Mankind. And thus the Grace, whereby Good men were assisted before or under the Law, was a branch of the Gospel dispensation then in force, and a Priviledge, not properly belonging to the Sacrifices then offered, but to the Sacri-

(s) Such is that opinion of Suarez, who represents it as one pre-eminence of the Gospel above the Law, that is, its Sacraments confer Grace ex opere operato, as the Schools express it. De Legib. L. x. Chap. viii. p. 721. n. 3.

fice of that *Lamb of God*, that *takes away the Sin* of the world; Of the whole World, and all the Ages of it, because slain, not actually indeed till the fulness of time, but virtually *from the very foundation of the world*; and so a propitiation having a retrospect to them that went before, as well as looking forward to them that have lived since, the time of shedding his blood upon the Altar of the Cross. This then must make a mighty difference, between the Case of them who observe *Jewish Rites*, while at the same time they do not acknowledge, nay obstinately deny any such Redeemer, or the least relation of their Sacrifices to Him; and *Theirs*, who partake of Sacraments with no other View, but as express Memorials and Pledges of his Death and the Benefits of it, and instances of the firmest dependence upon, and most engaging Tyes to love and serve him faithfully. From whence it follows, that, in things so very far from Parallel, no Argument can be drawn, from the veneration due to the Christian Sacraments, in favour of the Jewish Ceremonies.

Having thus, as I hope, sufficiently answered the *Jew's* Objections, I conclude this Point with turning some of their own Authorities upon them. If we may guess at the current Doctrine of that people, by the opinion of a Writer so considerable as *Philo*, almost every Tract in that great Volume will furnish proofs in abundance, that the Ceremonial part of their Law was designed in every Ordinance to shadow out and be subservient to some Moral Duty intimated by it. Or, if he be thought to have refined too nicely in the Allegorical way, we are content that *Maimonides* his (1) account of the Affirmative and Negative Precepts should decide this Controversy between us. He, among many other passages to this purpose, hath a remarkable

(1) More Ne-
voh. Part. iii.
Chap. xxvi.
xxvii xxx.
xxxii, &c.

distinction

distinction between the *First* and *Second* Intention of God in the Duties there enjoined. To the *First* he ascribes all such duties as are appointed for their own sakes; To the *Second* such as were subordinate to some better thing. Of *That* sort he reckons Articles of Faith, Invocation of God, Thanksgiving, Prayer, and the like: Of *This* Oblations, Sacrifices, and others of the same temper with them. The *Former*, he says, oblige at all times and places: the *Latter*, only in such Places and Circumstances, as are specified in the respective Laws concerning them. 'Tis true indeed he calls their Fringes and Phylacteries necessary appendages of Prayer, and upon that account allows these a room in the former Class, and declares them of perpetual Obligation. But here partiality to his Cause plainly breaks in upon the boundaries of a very substantial and just distinction. But then, concerning Sacrifices in particular, he delivers his mind freely in these memorable words. * For *this very reason we find the Prophets often reprov- ing men for an overscrupulous diligence in these matters: and inculcating to them, that those are things not intended principally and upon their own account, and that God hath no need of them.* All which he proceeds to confirm by that Text of *Jeremiah*, according to the sense I gave of it just now. So then, Except the *Jews* will run themselves upon the notorious absurdity of affirming the Means directed to a certain End to be nobler than that End it self, a Sign than the thing signified, and a Subordinate than its Principal, they ought at least to drop this Position of Their Outward and Ritual Worship being either Superiour, or so much any thing like equal, in Perfection and God's esteem, to Our Inward and Spiritual.

* More Ne-
vouch. P. iii.
Cap xxxi.

By this time I may be allowed to suppose the Thoughts of them, whom these Arguments have convinced, em-

ployed in congratulating a happiness so great, as that of living under a Dispensation, so perfect in it's Laws, so reasonable throughout in every Precept it binds upon us. And this is indeed the Christian's peculiar Glory, that His Duty shines by a native lustre of it's own, such as every Eye must see and be in love with, which does not set it self to wink against the Light. And what can be a nobler Privilege, what a more generous and delightful Pleasure, what a more powerful Incentive to Obedience, than for a Rational Creature clearly to discern the Equity, the Necessity, the Benefit, the Decency and Beauty of every Action he is called upon to do; And hence to be duly sensible, how gracious a Master he serves, One that is so far from loading him with fruitless and arbitrary and Tyrannical Impositions, that Each command, abstracting from His Authority who issued it, is able to recommend it self; and Nothing required but what every Wise Man would choose of his own Accord, and cannot without being his own Enemy so much as wish to be exempted from? But, as I would not forbid any of you this Satisfaction, so neither should I discharge my Office, did I forbear withall to warn you, that, as We may, and as too many (God knows) do order the matter, these Advantages may be our shame and justest Cause of Sorrow. For what Apology can be found for Them, who live in defiance to all sober Sense, while they live so to God's Authority; And never incur a condemnation from His, but what is sure to be seconded out of their own Mouths? If our Condition be Light, why are our Deeds Darkness? If we have the best Laws, how lamentable is our guilt if we have the worst lives? If the *Jews* are upbraided by the Prophets, for ministring to the *Gentiles* occasion of blaspheming God and his Truth, what reproaches can be sharp enough for *Christians*,

stians, who hold a clearer Truth in unrighteousness, and obstruct the Conversion of Jews and Gentiles both, by an open profanation, or such a formal empty profession of the Gospel, as does it more dishonour than if they professed it not at all? These are Examples of pernicious Consequence, and never fail to make One Article in our Adversaries Objections against us. A very weak and partial one indeed, because a misfortune common to all persuasions in the world. But still there is no help, but Doctrines will suffer greatly in their Credit, when the Power of them is not conspicuous in the Actions of those who espouse them. And this is so manifestly Our case, that though it be not difficult, yet perhaps neither is it decent to recriminate. The less, because there is no *Medium* with Us, between being a great deal better, or a great deal worse, than Any other men. And therefore, though the Offence be carried much too far by our Enemies, yet *Woe to Every man by whom the Offence cometh!* Let us then, my Brethren, make it our business to be Christians in Deed as well as in Word; and labour earnestly, that our Practice may be no more chargeable with Contradiction to the revelations of God, than our Principles truly are. To this purpose let the useful Duties and such as are of general Benefit to mankind be our Chief and Constant care. For he that hopes by the virtues of the *First* Table to atone for the Sins against the *Second*; He that supposeth Praying, Reading, Hearing, frequent Communicating, and the like, can sanctify Uncleaness or Intemperance, Falshood and Fraud, Covetousness or Extortion, Envy or Revenge, Slander or Detraction; This man in Superstition is an errand Jew, and in effect prefers a Ritual, before an Inward and Spiritual Service. It is to little purpose, that the Truth be strenuously vindicated by
Dis-

Discourse, if our Behaviour do not bear Testimony to it. Confute our Preachers may, but silence the ignorance of foolish men and gainsayers they never can effectually, without the People come in and do Their Part too. And therefore, If you have any regard to the honour and advantage of Religion; If any compassion to those poor Souls who sit still in darkness and the shadow of Death; If any tenderness to your Own, whose greatest danger is the abuse of the best and brightest Light; Do right to the Excellence of the purest and most perfect Law, give all diligence to be *holy as he who hath called you is holy*, Let your Conversation be as becometh the Gospel of Christ; that so men seeing your good works may glorify your father which is in heaven, and be thus forced to confess, that this is the true grace of God in which ye now stand.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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